caste in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Himachal Pradesh. However, a proposal for inclusion of "Lavana" community in the list of Scheduled Tribes in Himachal Pradesh has been received from the State Government of Himachal Pradesh.

(b) The proposal is being processed as per approved modalities.

Tribals facing eviction from land

853. SHRIMATI S.G. INDIRA: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that tribal people across the country are facing eviction from their land where they were living;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government are considering to provide land to tribal people in the areas where they can live peacefully and earn their livelihood; and

(d) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) to (d) As a result of inadequate recognition of the rights of forest dwelling scheduled tribes over forest land, where they have been living for generations, the threat of eviction persists. However, in order to save genuine forest dwellers, including tribals, from the threat of eviction, the Ministry of Environment & Forests, on 21.12.2004, requested all the States/UTs not to resort to eviction of forest dwellers, including tribals, other than ineligible encroachers till complete survey was carried out for recognition of such people and their rights on forest land as provided in the guidelines dated 18.9.1990 issued under the Forest (Conservation) Act, 1980. This was reiterated on 17.10.2005. On 3.11.2005, the Ministry of Environment & Forests also issued detailed revised guidelines for verification/recognition of such rights on forest land.

The Ministry of Tribal Affairs has also introduced a Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forest Rights) Bill, 2005 in the Lok Sabha on 13.12.2005, which seeks to recognise and vest the forest rights and occupation in forest land in forest dwelling scheduled tribes who have been residing in such forests for generations but whose rights could not be recorded, and to provide a framework for recording the forest rights so vested. The Bill

when enacted would recognise the rights of forest dwelling scheduled tribes relating to their (a) tenurial security, providing them relief against the physical and psychological alienation of land belonging to them; (b) livelihood, in terms of subsistence agriculture and ownership of minor forest produce, including rights to collect trade and collect the same; and (c) traditional and customary rights.

Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests Rights) Bill

854. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD: Will the Minister of TRIBAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the proposed Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests Rights) Bill has been examined by the Select Committee;

(b) the extent of forests land encroached upon by the forest dwellers and the percentage of those settlements which have been regularized in the name of the tribals; and

(c) whether the Bill proposes to treat October 25, 1980 as the cut-off date for recognition of legitimate rights over the land occupied by the tribals and if so, the rationale behind fixing this date as the cut-off mark?

THE MINISTER OF TRIBAL AFFAIRS (SHRI P.R. KYNDIAH): (a) The Scheduled Tribes (Recognition of Forests Rights) Bill, 2005, introduced by the Ministry of Tribal Affairs in the Lok Sabha on 13 December, 2005, has been referred to a Joint Committee of both the Houses for examination. The Joint Committee is yet to submit its report.

(b) As per the information furnished by the Ministry of Environment & Forests, 13.43 lakh hectares of forest land is under encroachment in the country. So far 3.66 lakh hectares of forest land have been regularised. The information regarding percentage of settlement regularised in the name of tribals is maintained by the State Governments.

(c) Yes, Sir. The rationale behind fixing October 25, 1980 as the cut-off date for recognition of legitimate rights over the land occupied by the tribals is that the Forests (Conservation) Act, 1980 had come into force on this date.